

■ **PIMS SURVEY**

# Ratio of tobacco users high in hospitalised patients

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A survey conducted at Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences revealed that 45 per cent of the admitted patients at the hospital were tobacco users in the form of active smokers, ex-smokers and 'naswar' addict. Being worried about increased prevalence of smoking amongst adolescents.

The survey was carried out by two students, Muhammad Muneeb Zafar and Umer Mahmood on internship at PIMS after their O-level examinations.

The survey was carried out through a questionnaire in the hospitalised male patients at PIMS to know the prevalence of tobacco users in hospitalised patients irrespective of their illness whether it be tobacco related or

not. All surgical and medical wards including cardiology and pulmonology were included in the survey, however the unwilling patients were excluded from the survey while female patients were also excluded owing to social reasons. Patients who quit smoking in the last three months were also classified as active smokers. Muhammad Muneeb and Umer Mahmood expressed that tobacco usage is a major risk factor for Ischemic heart disease, stroke and Peripheral vascular diseases as well as lung cancer and hence they opted for the survey. For the survey, a total of 200 patients were questioned out of which 17 per cent were active smokers, 12 per cent were ex-smokers while 16 per cent were 'naswar' addicts. If compared with the prevalence of smoking in general population,

statistics range between 25 to 35 per cent. Therefore relatively a higher percentage of patients hospitalised were found to be tobacco users.

PIMS Deputy Director Dr. Waseem Ahmed Khawaja, who shared the survey with 'The News' said that higher percentage of tobacco users among hospitalised patients might be because tobacco affects almost every organ of the body therefore the body systems of such people are more prone to various diseases. "Smokers are more prone to gastrointestinal upsets, infections and cancers."

The students, who conducted the survey among hospitalised patients also tried to explore the reasons behind high prevalence of tobacco usage including smoking in the society. They are of the view that increased stress

in life is one of the major factors that prompt teenagers to start smoking. Similarly, peer pressure and parental influence also add to this rising menace. The easy availability of cigarettes to minors in the absence of strict law implementation and lack of awareness among the masses, all contribute to the rising prevalence statistics, they say.

The students suggested that the government particularly the Ministry of Health should step forward for reducing this rising trend in the society through awareness campaigns and initiating strict laws as well as enforcement of existing ones. They say that if the government does not invest timely for the cause, a much higher sum would have to be spent on healthcare of patients having tobacco related diseases in the future.